MEMORIAL

OF

REV. ELIAS J. RICHARDS, D.D.

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E. J. Richards

MEMORIAL

OF THE

REV. ELIAS J. RICHARDS, D.D.,

LATE PASTOR OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

READING, PA.

PUBLISHED BY DIRECTION OF THE CONGREGATION.

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At a Special meeting of the Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church, Reading, Pa., held Friday evening, May 24, 1872, Mr. James Jameson was called to the Chair.

The following resolution, offered by Mr. Louis Richards, was unanimously adopted:—

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed by the Chair to request for publication copies of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Sermon of the late Rev. Dr. Richards, and the Memorial Sermon delivered by the Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, and that the same be compiled in a suitable memorial volume, in which shall also be printed the resolutions of condolence adopted by the Presbytery and by the Congregation upon the death of the Rev. Dr. Richards, together with any other material that may seem to the Committee to be appropriate to the work; to said Committee being also entrusted the details of the style and method of its publication.

The Chair appointed as the Committee called for by the Resolution, Messrs. Louis Richards, J. H. Sternbergh, and William M. Baird.

The meeting then adjourned.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY SERMON,

PREACHED BY

THE REV. ELIAS J. RICHARDS, D.D.,

IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, READING, PA.,

Sunday Evening, July 9, 1871.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY SERMON.

"Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." Acts xx. 18.

The parting of St. Paul with the elders of Ephesus is the most impressive and touching scene in all his eventful life. In an address of unequalled tenderness and beauty he poured out his whole soul to them. He appealed to their knowledge of his manner of life among them at all seasons. He reviews his labors among them for "the space of three years," and calls them to witness to his blameless life, his unselfish devotion, his abundant labors, his tears and temptations, and to the earnestness and fidelity with which he had discharged his duties as a Christian minister. When he had closed his address, he kneeled down with them all in that solitary place, on the shore of the great and wide sea on which he was soon to set sail, and

commended them unto God. It was a deeply affecting farewell; they "sorrowing most of all for the words that he spake, that they should see his face no more." And they parted there, Paul going bound in spirit unto Jerusalem, and the brethren returning to the scene of their labors and responsibilities.

It would be sheer presumption for any modern minister to bring his life and labors into comparison with those of the "chiefest of the apostles." Paul had a rare genius, and was the prince of preachers. He possessed some peculiar qualifications and endowments. His conversion was miraculous; he had seen the Lord, and he had the transcendent gift of inspiration. But while none may rival him in genius, in seraphic ardor, or in the grandeur of his achievements, yet other men may be conscious of the same honesty of purpose, and the same high endeavor to make full proof of their ministry. It is one thing to aspire and to strive, and another to achieve and be victorious.

No relation is more important or sacred than that which subsists between a pastor and his people. Without disparaging any other lawful calling which contributes to the order and prosperity of society, or to the safety and

improvement of the individual, there can be no doubt that the office of a Christian minister is of the highest excellence. It involves great labors and responsibilities. While it is the duty of the lawyer to defend the civil rights and property of men, and while it is the province of the physician to take care of the body and to guard the health, it is the duty of a minister to watch for souls as one that must give account. He has to do, not with the transient and perishable, but with the immortal interests of men. When the records and results of other labors have passed away and been forgotten, the effect of his preaching and prayers and pastoral labors will remain, and come under review in the last day. The issues are eternal. The pastoral relation should not be entered upon lightly or unadvisedly, but prayerfully, and in the fear of God; and when so formed, it should be dissolved only for weighty and sufficient reasons. It has ever been the policy of our Church to secure its permanency. It contemplates this in all its provisions and arrangements. There is a public and solemn act of installation. Pastor and people are charged with reciprocal duties, and assume mutual obligations. It is felt that the harmony and growth and prosperity of a congre-

gation is best secured when this relation is not transient and casual, but fixed and permanent. A pastor is somewhat more than an evangelist, ranging at will over wide fields of labor, and tarrying only for a season. He is somewhat more than a preacher, also, who, standing above, and apart from, the people, discourses to them upon high and holy themes. He is indeed commissioned "to stand in the temple and proclaim unto the people all the words of this life." But he has other important duties. God has made him an overseer, a shepherd, and "bishop of souls." Upon him devolves the duty of inspection, oversight and watchfulness. He dwells among his own people, not as an acquaintance and friend only, but as their teacher and adviser in spiritual things. He knows them, and they know him, thoroughly. He is admitted freely into the inner circles of life. He is with his people at all seasons, in prosperity and adversity, in joy and in sorrow, at weddings and at funerals. They come to him in the most solemn crises of their history, and consult him on the most momentous of all subjects. Long intercourse widens his friendships and deepens his affections, so that, in the course of years, there is a close interweaving of all the fibres of

their existence. Confidence springs up, and attachments are formed which greatly extend a pastor's influence for good. Enduring relations, also, give to his ministry greater breadth and compass. He can avail himself of the laws of growth and progress. The impressions made to-day can be deepened to-morrow. The seed sown can be watered, and the field cultivated, until the harvest is gathered. A far greater good is ultimately secured than when the system is narrowed down and condensed for a short continuance. It is only the strong faith that I have had in these principles, joined to an abiding conviction of personal duty, that has led me, in spite of frequent and strong solicitations to enter other inviting fields, still to remain here at the post of duty.

This is to me an occasion of great solemnity and interest. The present Sabbath completes a period of twenty-five years during which I have been the Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Reading. I preached my first sermon here, on the second Sabbath of July, 1846. I am not a stranger among you, nor am I speaking to strangers. Standing before you to-day, at the end of a quarter of a century, I may say "Ye know after what manner I have been with you

at all seasons." It is not with confident boasting that I make this appeal to your judgment, but in all humility, and with the deep consciousness of having fallen very far short of my endeavors. I apprehend that I may have less to fear from your severity than your partiality; and I shrink not so much from the scrutiny of my congregation, as from my own self-inspection, and from the searching eye of God.

Twenty-five years! In that time almost a generation has passed away. Childhood has ripened into maturity, manhood has sunk into decrepitude, and old age has found its resting place in the grave. "Instead of the fathers are the children." Twenty-five years—and in the middle of the Nineteenth Century! What eventful years they have been, and what a record they will have in history. What marvellous and unlooked-for events have come to pass. What great and startling changes have they witnessed. The mightiest political revolutions have taken place in the world. Empires have risen and fallen, kingdoms have changed their rulers and changed their boundaries. Of all those who wore the diadem of royalty a quarter of a century ago, not one occupies a throne in Europe to-day save the widowed Queen of England. France has

been by turns a kingdom, a republic, an empire, and is again in the throes of a revolution. Prussia that was but a small and fragmentary kingdom, has advanced to the front rank of nations, and her king has been elected to wear the crown of Charlemagne as Emperor of Germany. Italy, so long divided between petty sovereigns, has at length realized its dream of unity. Victor Emmanuel has established his throne in the old Rome of the Cæsars. Terrible and bloody wars have been waged in India, in Hungary, in the Crimea, in Italy, in France, and in the United States. Great and decisive battles have been fought, making epochs in the history of nations. Sadowa, Sedan, and Gettysburg will henceforth rank with Thermopylæ, Pharsalia, and Waterloo.

What great and important changes have been wrought by steam and electricity, in the mode, as well as in the channels of commercial intercourse. They have bound together sundered continents, and brought distant nations into daily communication. Within the period contemplated, the Suez Canal was begun and completed. The Alps, also, have been pierced by a tunnel, and the Rocky Mountains scaled by a railroad that opens new routes of travel to the Eastern world. Such gigantic feats of engineering and enterprise

find no parallel in the past. And this, too, has been the era of Atlantic Cables. By these, time and distance are almost annihilated. We read the news of the previous day from London and Paris and St. Petersburg at the breakfast-table every morning. Five and twenty years ago China and Japan were closed against commerce and Christianity. But the wall of partition has been broken down. Ignorance and superstition have had to yield to science and civilization. Treaties have been formed, guaranteeing the rights and safety of those engaged in trade. The Bible has been translated into foreign languages, and missionaries are permitted to travel and preach the gospel without molestation. The whole world is now open to the church of God. Great progress has marked these years, in science, in the arts, in liberty and in religion. It has been a privilege to live and labor in such an age of the world.

Our own country, especially, has witnessed great changes, and been the theatre of the most marvellous events. Its domain has been vastly extended. New states and territories have been added. Its population has almost doubled, numbering now nearly forty millions. Cities and towns have sprung up as if by magic. The land

has been in a great measure covered by a network of railroads and magnetic telegraphs, thus facilitating trade and travel. What wonderful revelations have been made of the vast resources and wealth of the country! Mines of coal and iron, of gold and silver have been discovered that seem inexhaustible. Great advance has been made in commerce, in manufactures, and in agriculture. Capital has been increased a hundred fold. More has been done within the past twenty-five years to promote the interests of science and education than in the previous century. Colleges, academies, seminaries, and observatories have sprung up in every part of our land. And what a wealth of endowment many of them have received.

The great institutions of religion have never been so prospered. It has been emphatically the era of church extension in our land. Cities and towns, and villages have been adorned with churches, of a style and character such as the past age knew nothing of. Everywhere there has been substantial progress.

The time has also been filled with great and startling events. This great Republic is no longer to be regarded as a doubtful experiment in self-government. It has passed in safety through the most fiery ordeal to which any na-

tion can be subjected. It has crushed out the most formidable rebellion that the world has ever seen, and it stands to-day stronger and more stable and glorious than ever before. Slavery was the one unnatural and dangerous element in our Constitution, and the one dark and disgraceful blot upon our escutcheon. It was a perpetual menace to the harmony and integrity of the Union. Its whole influence was demoralizing. It corrupted Congress, the Press, and the Pulpit. It controlled public sentiment, and subsidized most of the wealth and talent of the country. It could not be discussed anywhere without arousing passion, and no man could even pray for the down-trodden and oppressed without offence. The irrepressible conflict began, and none could foresee its issues. Good men hoped and prayed that the dark problem might find some peaceful solution by a system of gradual emancipation. But this hope was not to be realized. Compromises were made in vain. The dark cloud grew darker every year, and now and then were seen vivid flashes of lightning that foretokened the coming tempest. The first shot fired upon Fort Sumpter plunged the nation into all the horrors of a civil war. And what a war it was, waged on such a broad arena, and between such gigantic forces!

The world had never seen anything like it before, and, it is to be hoped, it may never see anything like it again. But the stern logic of events settled forever the question of slavery. The sword gave freedom to four millions of men who had been pining in bondage. Henceforth this broad land is to be the land of the free.

We now look back with feelings of awe and wonder at that terrible and bloody strife. It seems more like some strange and appalling vision of the night than a reality. But it was no dream, or fading vision. The thousands of families that have been stricken with sorrow, the thousands of homes that have been made desolate by war, the fathers and mothers, the wives and sisters that have wept in bitterness over fallen sons, husbands, and brothers, are witnesses that it was no dream. The many battle-fields where our heroes fought and fell, the wretched prisons and hospitals where they languished or starved, and the cemeteries where they sleep their last sleep, assure us that it was a stern and awful reality. And as long as the custom lasts of decorating their graves with the flowers of spring, we shall not be suffered to forget what a sacrifice of precious lives it cost to save our imperiled country. And having emerged from

that bloody baptism and been purified by the fires of war, loved at home and revered abroad, she has set out upon a career of prosperity and splendor.

To us, as Presbyterians, the most auspicious and glorious event has been the re-union of our beloved Church. For thirty years the Church was in the wilderness, divided into two camps marching in sight of each other, yet refusing to mingle. It was a scandal to the Church, and a grief to the friends of religion. Ephraim envied Judah, and Judah vexed Ephraim. But at last, when death had done its work upon those who had been most active in the strife, and a calmer spirit reigned in the Church, they were drawn together by a sure instinct. And when the word RE-UNION was uttered, it found a unanimous response from all quarters. The providence of God effected what no human wisdom could have compassed. It was a grand and impressive event, never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. We are permitted to rejoice over it as an accomplished fact. Members of the same household, after years of alienation and strife, now happily dwell together in unity. The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad; and as the witness of their joy and

thanksgiving, the re-united Church determined to raise five millions of dollars as a memorial offering unto God. But she has done more and better than she purposed. In the final summing up it was found to be but little short of ten millions! It was such an offering as was worthy of this great historic Church, and it has won for her the commendation of sister churches on both sides of the Atlantic.

During this period there have been great changes in our own city. Time was when Reading was known only as "a little Dutch town up among the mountains." Twenty-five years ago it was an incorporated borough of some twelve thousand inhabitants, of which Peter Filbert, Esq., was Chief Burgess. It was a staid and quiet town, with a decided look of quaintness. Its streets had recently been graded, but were not yet lighted with gas. The Court House had disappeared from Penn Square, but the old brick Market Houses, which gave place to those recently removed, were still standing. There was but one railroad, and one passenger train a day each way. On other routes the old stage coaches afforded the only facility for travel. The public school system had been but partially organized, and not a school-house had yet been

built. Great progress has been witnessed in the last quarter of a century. The borough has become the third city in the State, having a population of nearly forty thousand. Its boundaries have been extended, new streets have been opened, and many vacant places covered with substantial dwellings. Business has greatly increased. The whole river front is now lined with furnaces, forges, rolling mills, and various other manufacturing establishments. On every side may be seen changes and improvements, in stores and shops, in public buildings and private residences. Fine, spacious, and well-arranged school-houses have been erected in every ward of the city. Our youth also enjoy the advantages of a High School, which is worthy of the patronage it receives in the community. A model prison has been built, not excelled by any in the State. The city now boasts of a Cemetery—a city of the dead—beautiful for situation, and the noble gift of that old and honored citizen whose name it bears. In religious affairs, also, we have made a decided advance. During these twenty-five years there has been a great increase in the number of churches, and in the accumulation of church property. New churches have been built and old ones re-modeled, enlarged, and improved.

The accommodations for worshippers have more than kept pace with the growth of the population.

Great changes have occurred in the society of Reading, by deaths and removals. We may well ask—"The fathers, where are they?" When I came here, five-and-twenty years ago, the leading men at the Bar were Evans, and Biddle, and Banks, and Gordon, and Dechert, and Strong. The last, only, survives to adorn the Bench of the Supreme Court of the country. Our medical practitioners were the Drs. Hiester, and Otto, and Gries, and Stuart, and Hunter, and these are all gone. And how few do we meet on the street, or in the places of concourse, of our old merchants and business men. Of the ministers who filled the pulpits of the various churches at that period, not one remains in his place. In some of the pulpits there have been many changes, in all of them more than one. Many, and perhaps better, pastors have found difficulties and been dismissed, and others have not been suffered to continue by reason of death. It has been my sad duty to follow to their last resting places, at different times, the Rev. Drs. Miller and Richards, and the Rev. Messrs. Wiggins, and Pauli, and Hoffman, and Keller, and Gloucester, and Hunt.

My old associates are in heaven, and I am living among new men.

When I came among you, this congregation was worshipping in the "Old White Church," on West Penn Street, a building not very attractive, or eligibly situated. The lecture-room was in the basement, dark, damp, poorly ventilated, and with no accommodations for the Sabbath-school. A few months after my installation, measures were taken to secure a more central location, and to erect a new and more commodious church. The corner stone of this building was laid, with appropriate services, on the 27th of June, 1847, and it was dedicated to the worship of God on the 19th of November, 1848. The church remained in its original condition until 1867, when many changes and improvements were made. It was re-upholstered and painted, new gas fixtures were procured, and these beautiful memorial windows put in place. The cost of the building and ground, together with the late improvements, was not far from forty thousand dollars. Our object has been to meet the wants of the times, and to render this house worthy of Him whom we worship. It is a great mistake to suppose that God is indifferent to the kind of temple which His people consecrate

to His service. If it be not the noblest and best within the compass of their means, it is not what He may reasonably expect from them. For the church is not to be regarded as a place where divine worship may be celebrated, but also as a perpetual offering unto God; an anthem praising Him as it stands silently like the stars that have no speech, yet are forever singing as they shine.

To me this structure is invested with peculiar interest. I had some agency in determining its plan and arrangement. It cost me much thought and anxiety and labor to make it what it now is. I watched with eager interest these walls as they went up, stone upon stone, and every subsequent step and stage of its progress toward completion. Others may be grander and more costly, but none can be to me so dear or sacred. It has been my spiritual home through all these years. Here, in this pulpit, I have stood to preach the Gospel to my fellow-men. Here I have witnessed scenes of ingathering and the consecration of souls to God that have not only made the church glad, but have called forth a sweeter note from the harp of Gabriel. I have hallowed memories and associations connected with all things around me. I regard this edifice, also, as a reasonable guaranty for the future of this congregation. It is sub-

stantial in its character, ample in its dimensions, convenient in its arrangements and sufficiently tasteful and elegant to meet the wishes of reasonable men. It is centrally located, just where it will be wanted for generations to come. It will stand when I am gone, when you are gone. Here the word will be preached and the ordinances be administered. Other pastors will stand in this pulpit, other members will occupy these pews, other elders will bear in their hands the symbols of the great sacrifice, other parents will dedicate their children in Christian baptism. A century hence it will be regarded as the most enduring and befitting monument of those who reared it. Peace be within its sacred walls!

As a church, we have had some difficulties to contend with in our growth and progress. It is to be remembered that this is a somewhat peculiar community. The mass of the population has no natural affinity with the Presbyterian Church. Other forms of faith and worship are here in the ascendant. By descent and education and personal preferences, the people are drawn into other communions. And we honor them for their strong attachment to the faith of their fathers. We, on the other hand, are dependent mainly on the influx from abroad for our increase. This

source is less reliable and certain. It has its ebbs and flows. We are subjected to a constant drain by the removal of our active young men to the larger cities, or to the West. We have dismissed over one hundred members, during this period, to the city of Philadelphia alone. We suffered severely also, during one decade, by the loss of a number of our oldest and best families, who had been identified with the church from the beginning. And yet, in spite of all these hindrances, it is gratifying to be able to record substantial progress. When the church records came into my hands, there were one hundred and sixty members on the roll. Meantime, we have admitted, in the aggregate, more than five hundred persons to our communion. Three-fifths of these have been received on the profession of their faith. And notwithstanding the losses to which we have been subjected by death and removals, the present membership on the register of the church is four hundred and seventeen. The progress has been onward from year to year, and though the growth has not been as rapid as we could wish, it has been steady and healthy. Very precious seasons of revival have been enjoyed by this people from time to time, some more and some less extended and powerful, but all of

them bringing forth such fruit of increase as greatly to strengthen the church and to create joy in heaven. In these seasons we have depended upon God and ourselves. The pastor, with little foreign aid, has conducted the services, preaching evening after evening, and for several weeks. They were truly times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and will never be forgotten by those who were then made heirs of grace.

The Sabbath-school of this church is the oldest in our city. It was for many years conducted as a Union School, and very many have been trained up in it to become efficient laborers in other relations. The record of the school for the past twenty-five years has been a very honorable and encouraging one. It has been indeed the nursery of the church. Not a single year has passed without more or less ingathering of precious fruit from it. According to the last Annual Report, it numbers three hundred and twenty-eight persons, teachers and scholars, and at present it is in a very prosperous and promising condition. Meantime we have not been unmindful of the destitute sections of the city. During most of this period, two flourishing mission schools have been conducted and supported by members

of this church. Three years ago, a new enterprise was started at the Rolling Mill, that promises good success. A flourishing Sunday-school has been gathered, and a Memorial Chapel erected at a cost of about five thousand dollars. Services are now held in it twice every Sabbath, and we have good hopes that it may soon result, by the blessing of God, in the organization of a new church.

The cause of Christian benevolence has always received the active sympathy and co-operation of this church. It has been my aim to lead its members to consecrate their substance to God, and to regard themselves as stewards of His bounty. In the Sunday-school a system of monthly contribution was established more than twenty years ago, and with most gratifying results. There has been a gradual increase, the contributions the last year amounting to three hundred and thirty-five dollars. A like increase has been witnessed in the benefactions of the church. They have averaged more than one thousand dollars a year during the period under review. Nor must I omit to mention that the Ladies' Sewing Society has each winter made up a box of clothing for the family of some home missionary, valued at one or two hundred dollars. At the same time they

have not been unmindful of the poor and destitute in our own church and community. Thus, from a review of the past, while we find reason to be humbled that we have done no more, we also find abundant cause for gratitude to God, and for renewed encouragement for the future.

But mere dry statistics cannot adequately convey to us the results of Christian ministry. Silently and unseen it has been going on through all these years. Think of the impressions and experiences that have here taken place, of the decisions that have been formed for eternity, the consolations that, in connection with ministrations, have been poured into the bosom of affliction, the great thoughts and emotions that have been awakened in believing souls, and that have gone out hence to be embodied in noble actions, the evil influences that have been counteracted, the wanderers that have been reclaimed, the miseries that have been alleviated, the hopes that have been confirmed, and the souls made meet for heaven. Bread has been cast upon the waters that may be found after many days. Seed has here been sown, which, though it may lie buried long in dust, yet shall not deceive our hope. The good may appear long after our day. It may appear on the shores of another continent;

it may appear on the shores of another world. No, not until the great day of revelation, not until we enter the eternal world shall we be able to sum up the good accomplished in this church during the last quarter of a century. But not unto us, but unto God be all the glory.

The past twenty-five years are not without their record of bereavement and sorrow. Very few yet remain of those who called me to this field of labor. In vain I endeavor to re-assemble the audience to whom I first preached. They are scattered far and wide. Some are distant and some are dead. Of the many once familiar forms, some have entered into fellowship with the church militant in other places, and some have joined "the General Assembly and Church of the First Born in Heaven." There are dear faces pictured in memory that appear no more in our social gatherings, and there are names not difficult to recall that have been chiseled on monumental marble for many a year. As I look over this congregation to-day, I realize most deeply what changes have taken place in individuals and families, changes in the Board of Trustees, in the session, in the choir, and in the pews. Death has been among us, reaping with no sparing hand. Few dwellings are there that

during this period have not been draped in mourning. Often, oh! how often, have we wept together as we have laid our loved ones down in that sleep which on earth knows no waking. Of the elders who have borne to you the sacramental emblems, John McKnight, Elijah Dechert, and William Eckert have gone to join the "four-and-twenty elders" who stand before the throne of God. And we miss from their accustomed seats such men as Charles Pearson, Samuel Bell, William Peocock, Henry Robeson, Samuel Strong, William McFarland, John Zeller, James Luckie, Thomas Hunter, Daniel Reeser, John Fritz, and Thomas McCombs—not to mention others whose names you will easily recall. Death is no respecter of persons. No age nor sex has been spared. Many cherished little ones have been transplanted to the other side. Young maidens in the glow of their beauty, and young men in the pride of their manhood we have followed to their last resting places. And mothers in Israel, also—"noble women not a few"—women "full of good works and alms deeds which they did," have been taken from us, and the church has made devout lamentations over them. Their names and record are on high.

My most tender and impressive recollections

to-day are connected with those scenes of bereavement and burial. I have sat, scores of times, in the dim light and close atmosphere of the dying chamber, and with aching head and heart have watched and prayed while humanity was struggling in life's last agonies. I have stood by many a coffin and many a grave, and spoken words of consolation which my own heart craved as much as yours. For am I not a man and a brother? Could I do otherwise than mingle my tears with yours when death was robbing me of some of my warmest and most cherished earthly friends? They are gone to be forever with the Lord, and earth appears less dark and lonely when we remember that "such as these have lived and died."

> "Remembered are the dead! They have lain down,
> Believing that when all our work is done
> We would lie down beside them, and be near
> When the last trump shall summon to fold up
> The trusting flock, and with the promises,
> Whose words could sweeten death,
> Take up once more the interrupted strain;
> And wait Christ's coming, saying—'Here am I
> And those whom thou hast given me.'"

You will pardon, I trust, some references to myself, on an occasion like this, as they seem

unavoidable. Twenty-five years ago, I came among you in answer to a very unanimous and earnest call from this church, a call thrice repeated in the space of a few months. I was then a young man, with but a limited experience in the ministry. I greatly distrusted my ability to meet the responsibilities of such a charge. My health, too, had been shattered by a recent illness. If I wondered at the venture you made in extending me a call at the first, I wondered still more at your persistence in urging my acceptance. It was not without many doubts and misgivings that I yielded at last to the judgment of friends and what seemed to be the convictions of duty. I came here a stranger, and literally "in much fear and trembling." You know the result. The union then formed has remained unbroken, and the harmony and peace of the congregation has scarcely been disturbed by a ripple. My personal intercourse with this people has ever been most pleasant and familiar. I have endeavored to regard them all—rich and poor, old and young—as my friends. My purpose has been to visit all the families at least once every year, but from sickness and other unavoidable circumstances, I have not always been able to accomplish it. No one but a pastor can know

how difficult it is to meet the wishes of a congregation in this particular. If, in any instance, there has been apparent remissness on my part which has grieved any heart, I can assure such that no such remissness was intended, and that it can be regretted by no person more sincerely than by myself.

It would be doing great injustice to my own feelings, as well as to the demands of the occasion, were I to omit some distinct reference to the manner in which this people have treated their pastor from the first day until the present hour. Need I say that it has been kind, considerate, indulgent, and often generous treatment. I cannot enumerate all the marks of confidence and esteem that I have received at your hands. One instance, however, I may allude to as marked by a white stone in my memory. Fifteen years ago, when my health was likely to fail utterly, you kindly voted to give your pastor rest for some months, and also something substantial to sweeten that rest by enabling him to visit the Old World. I shall feel richer and happier for life by what I was permitted to see. I would not part with the new experience I then had, nor lose the thoughts there awakened, nor blot out the impressions then received, from the works of art and nature, for any

man's fortune. There are those among the living, as well as among the dead, whose words of encouragement, genial sympathy, and needed assistance have a record in my heart of hearts. Few pastors have been more favored in the people to whom they have ministered. To the Trustees, holding as they do very important relations to the comfort and success of the pastor; to the Elders, who have counseled and encouraged him in all his labors; to the Superintendents and Teachers, who have aided him in training the young; to the Choir, who have added so much to the interest of worship; to the dear Children, who have ever welcomed him with smiles; and especially to that little band of faithful Christian men and women, who have sustained him by their attendance at the lecture and the prayer meeting; to one and all of these I take pleasure, on this public occasion, in tendering my sincere and heartfelt acknowledgments. May the Lord reward them a thousandfold for all their kindness to me.

When I assumed the office of a Christian minister, it was with the full consciousness of its solemn responsibilities. The one work given me to do was to preach the Gospel. I felt that I had no choice, no discretion in the matter. "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me

if I preach not the Gospel." Not philosophy, nor science, nor literature, but Christ crucified has been my theme. Not Socrates and Plato, but Paul and John have been my teachers. In my ministry in this place, I have never sought after novelties, never chosen mere sensational themes, never pursued any hobbies, never indulged in curious speculations, nor engaged in angry and useless controversies, nor dragged in politics. I have never felt justified in courting a grin when I should woo a soul, nor in addressing the fancy with amusing tales when sent with God's commission to the heart. While I have never been careless of the approbation of my people, I can honestly say that I have been more anxious to profit than to please them; more anxious to commend myself to their consciences than to their tastes. I have the consciousness this day that I have been sincere in preaching the Gospel, never preaching what I did not believe, and never keeping back anything I did believe and felt it my duty to preach. I have endeavored to make the Cross of Christ central in my preaching, as it is in my system of theology. Nor have I ignored the creed of our Church, as containing the best expression of "the faith once delivered to the saints." It may

not be very popular in this age of liberal, but shallow, thinking. I adopt it intelligently, heartily. I bind it as a crown unto me. If it has Alpine sternness and gloom, it has also Alpine grandeur and glory. In connection with it is developed the best type of religious character the world has ever known. It nourished the manly piety of martyrs and reformers, and from its strong mould spring such "cedars of God" as Anselm and Augustine, Luther and Calvin, Howe and Edwards.

In regard to the character of my pulpit ministrations, I have uniformly labored to make them as perfect as I could. I have seldom, or never, brought here that which cost me nothing. God has required beaten oil for the sanctuary. While I have not ambitiously made sermons to gain a reputation for genius, learning, and taste, I have still recognized the right of this people to my best thoughts at all times. It has been my custom, when health and other duties would permit, to devote many hours a day, and often many days in a week, to my pulpit preparations. But I have always had an ideal of excellence in sermonizing which has mocked my attainments, and after striving to do my best, I have often been pained by a sense of miserable failure.

None of my hearers have judged me more severely than I have judged myself. While here, I have preached over three thousand sermons, and have been with you at a hundred communions.

It is not to be supposed that all these years should pass over me without their personal trials. I have not been exempt from the common lot. I have felt vexations and troubles; I have experienced disappointments and losses. I have not been a stranger to dejected hopes. Often I have known what it was to be a sufferer. There have been years, many years, when there were but few days in the week, and often but few hours in the day, of respite from pain and discomfort. I look back now with wonder that I could labor at all, that I did not yield to the temptation of giving up in despair. But God was better to me than my fears, and brought me through. I have known, also, one sore bereavement. Suddenly I was called to go down to the margin of the cold, dark river, with the wife of my youth and the mother of my children, and to gaze after her wistfully and with tears, as she passed over to the other side. I have been taught by these trials that religion has consolations for the darkest hours, and that joy is often born of sorrow, as

morning is of night. The aspects of life have somewhat changed with the flight of years. Many illusions have vanished, many sanguine hopes have miscarried, and all the roseate hues of that morning time have faded into the light of common day.

Ministers, I am aware, are often stigmatized as hirelings, and accused of discharging their responsible duties in a cold, heartless, and perfunctory manner. It may sometimes be so, not often. But God is my witness when I tell you that what toils and trials, anxieties and sorrows, I have had as a man, are light afflictions compared with those I have endured as a minister. The heaviest burden upon my heart has been the burden of souls. The deepest grief I have ever felt has been for my want of success in winning souls to Christ. There is no sorrow like unto this sorrow. The world knows little of the days of darkness and solicitude, and the nights of wakefulness and weeping that fall to the lot of every faithful minister. God will not forget.

You will bear me witness that I am not in the habit of obtruding any personal matters upon the attention of this congregation. Perhaps on an occasion like this, I may be justified in a passing allusion to my own views and feelings on a sub-

ject above all others the most important, and to which I have so often directed your attention. My religious experience extends over a period of more than forty years. And I would say that I have no doubt of the reality and truth of the Christian religion, that it is what it purports to be, a revelation from Heaven. I regard the glorious Gospel of Christ as worthy of all acceptation. The doctrines of grace, atonement by the blood of a dying Saviour, justification by his righteousness, sanctification by the spirit of God, and the guarantees of son-ship and saint-ship, these are enshrined within my heart. I repose in them an unquestioning trust. They were never so true and precious to me as in these later years. I expect to be saved through no merit of my own, but by the Grace of God in Jesus Christ. Through him alone have I righteousness and peace. Blessed be God, I have long enjoyed a comfortable hope. I would not exchange it for the wealth of worlds. It has been my stay and support in all my labors and trials. Religion is now my delight and comfort in life. My happiest thoughts spring from this source. My sweetest moments are those in which I think most clearly of religious truth, and feel most strongly its genial power. Its resources and provisions are all-sufficient for my spiritual

necessities. And now, when the shadows begin to lengthen, I look with composure into the tomb, and with joyful anticipations to my heavenly home in the skies.

Turning now from the past, what shall I say for the future? It is not for me to lift the veil to see what may lie beyond it. But well I know that we shall never meet on another such anniversary. Full well I know that I shall not be able to repeat, here or elsewhere, such a ministry as that which has been the subject of this review. The largest and most effective portion of my life is past. My manhood was given to this church, in honest and earnest labor. Though I have some years yet before I count the three-score, still I feel that the infirmities of age are gradually creeping over me. Time, and toil, and sickness have left their impress on a constitution never robust, and often too severely taxed. The almond-tree has already blossomed, the eye has lost its keenness of vision, and the heart is less buoyant than when I came to you a quarter of a century since. It is not for me to say how long I may be permitted to continue in my present relation. I leave that to the wise decision of Him who appoints our lot and regulates our ways. Under any circumstances, I could not

leave this church without the deepest regret. It would seem like leaving home and beginning life anew. I have been here too long not to love the place and the people. Things have grown familiar to me. I have pleasant memories with the very aspects of earth and sky. These circling hills are dear unto me. It cannot be expected that I should ever become as deeply attached to any other people as to those to whom I have given my toils and cares, my prayers and tears for so many years. "When I die," said Queen Mary, "you will find the name of *Calais* written on my heart." Whether here or elsewhere, in this world or in eternity, this church will ever be associated with my best and happiest days. The past, at least, is secure. If I have any wish for the future, it is that I may be able to labor on until I am called to my final rest. I have an instinctive dread of a decrepit, helpless, and profitless old age.

But I weary your patience, and must close. These departed years have a special monition for me to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. When Pompeii was destroyed, there were multitudes buried in the ruins of it. Some were found in the streets, as if attempting to make their escape. Some were

found in vaults, as if they had gone there for security. Some were found in saloons, as if surprised in their pleasures. But where did they find the Roman sentinel? At the city gate where his captain had placed him, with his hand still grasping his war weapon; and there, while the Heavens threatened him; there while the earth rocked beneath him; there, while the lava stream rolled on, he stood at his post; and there, after seventeen centuries had passed, he was found. Brethren, I ask your earnest prayers for me, that I may continue at the post of duty without faltering or fainting. I am not weary *of* my work, but I am often weary *in* it. Here, to-day, I would solemnly renew the consecration of my heart's best affections, and my whole being to that Saviour who says: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Amen!

MEMORIAL SERMON

OF THE

REV. ELIAS J. RICHARDS, D.D.

PREACHED BY

REV. WALLACE RADCLIFFE,

IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, READING, PA.,

SABBATH EVENING, MAY 5, 1872.

MEMORIAL SERMON.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10, last clause.

A crown of life, a spiritual diadem, honor, power, and immortality, a blessing that shall be comprehensive, satisfying, remunerative, and eternal; a life of contrasts and cumulative glory; that, whereas there has been in it obscurity, there shall be renown, whereas denial, there shall be restitution, whereas conflict, there shall be victory, whereas pain, there shall be exquisite gratification, whereas a living death, there shall be a life enduring as that of God, a life in which whatsoever things are pure, are honest, are lovely, are of good report, whatsoever a perfect being can desire, whatsoever a perfected being can be, shall be appropriated—this is the benediction of God upon His accepted ones. And this not by achievement of human power, nor by limitation of worldly accident, but as the gift of divine favor, not as the result of human working, but as the divine reward to the spirit of that work. And herein is the divergence between human and divine plans. In

the accepted theories of men, the result is rewarded independently of the means used, and the stimulating ideas. The ruthless hand may snatch the crown from worthier heads, the name may glitter with stolen splendor, and the sceptre wave with an usurped authority, the march may have been over the heaped-up graves, dishonored vows, and prostituted friendships; there may have been deceits, injustices, and oppressions, but the processes and animating principles are too often condoned, overlooked, or forgotten, in the hilarity and brilliancy of the result. Man says, Success is success. God says, Faithfulness is success. There may be no accumulated fortune, no historic name nor laurel crown, not even the comfort and approval of honest industry, there may be even discomfort, disappointment, and evident and irremediable failure in well-matured desires and plans, and yet so pure has been the spirit of the work, so faithful to every revelation of the right, that the whole life smiles with the favor of God, and receives His "well-done," and welcome into heaven. The real approval, then, that which is permanent and sufficient, is not for anything which can be gathered up with the hand or looked upon, it is for the motive, the cherished principle, the measure of conscience. The divine judgment has no factitious standards, is not amused with superficial glitter, is not dazed with temporary advantage, these and all things carnal and earthly are but the accidents of existence—the fine dust in the balance that are as nothing against the principles of action—the essentials of the life. And such is a standard adapted

to human wants. It is practical. It is attainable. It is enduring. Every man can run. Every man cannot grasp a prize. Every man can fight. Every man cannot be victor. Every man can be faithful. Every man cannot be renowned. To be faithful is to surrender one's self to Christ, to acknowledge His authority, and accept His service, and, therefore, to refer the whole life to His direction. It is to acquiesce in His will, and to see the present work, the present condition of things, as the expression of that will to you. It is to do the work thus set to your hand diligently, constantly, in love to Him who has appointed it, and to those affected by it. It is to go on conscientiously in the Providential labor, though there seem no result, resting in the wisdom of Him appointing, and in the verity of His word that what you know not now you shall know hereafter.

The faithful Christian is but the trusty servant, who hears the Master's will and carries the burden, or runs the errand, not dictating nor interrogating, nor worrying about the end. And just such simple, homely, available, straightforwardness in the discharge of daily duties God honors as the highest virtue of man. It is within reach of the little child, and adorns the hoary temples of age. It glorifies the peasant's hut, and becomes the throned monarch better than his crown. It dignifies the humblest act, and adds lustre to the most exalted. It receives the last final approval. It enters heaven.

It is to the contemplation of such a faithfulness, completed and honored, that we gather here to-night.

There walked one among you for twenty-five years, meek, unassuming, yet self-possessed and reliant, quiet in his assured purpose, hopeful, and sympathetic in his set work, following in the steps as they were ordered, sowing the seed, nor repining because the harvest was not yet; laying the foundations, nor disappointed that another must build thereupon; witnessing in weariness, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling;" faithful unto death, and he is not, for God has called him to his coronation.

In pronouncing this eulogy upon your departed pastor, no one feels more keenly than I that one of such recent and limited acquaintance should speak to you of him whom you have known for so many years in the intimate friendships and Christian sympathies of the pastorate. I feel in every way unequal. As I recall the many reminiscences that have fallen from your lips of his tenderness, his delicate susceptibility, his natural pathos as he sought to comfort you concerning your departed ones, his words that wept, his eyes suffused with the sympathy his faltering lips could not speak, I cannot but think of the confession of another when about to pronounce an encomium upon Rome's greatest orator, "There is need of Cicero himself to be his own fit eulogist." There is need at least that some of those older friends who had mingled their prayers and counsels with his, and stood by him in the burden and heat of the day, should speak of his worth from the riches of their own experience. But Wallace, Brainerd, Barnes, they preceded him out of the tribulation, they

rest from their labors, and already robed and crowned have welcomed him to the joy of the Lord. But after all what need were there of men and occasions? What were tearful voice, or tender words, or glowing periods, to that life which, simple and uneventful though it were, in its serene faith, its humble work, its fidelity, its good results, and precious memory, is its own best eulogy?

The main features in his life are doubtless familiar to all, because of your long acquaintance, and their recent and frequent publicity.

Elias Jones Richards, the son of Hugh and Jane Ellis Jones Richards, was born January 14, 1813, in the Valley of the Dee, in the west of England, not many miles from the town of Llangollen, in Wales, whose famous vale is noted for its picturesque beauties and its antiquities. His ancestors were tillers of the soil, the principal industry of the surrounding region. The father was an adherent of the Presbyterian faith, and his mother a devout member of the Church of England. This good woman died when her son Elias was but four years of age. For her he always cherished the fondest regard, his memory with a remarkable tenacity extending back to those early years and retaining some idea of her personal appearance and maternal care. He carried through life the conviction that she expressed the wish for his devotion to the ministry, which fact no doubt strengthened his subsequent purpose. About a year after the death of his wife, Hugh Richards left his native land for America, whither his elder brother John

had years before preceded him, and, as a land surveyor, had already amassed considerable means in the northern part of the State of New York. Of his six children, Hugh Richards brought four with him, the two younger, Jane and Richard, remaining behind until some years after. Johnsburg, Warren Co., N. Y., was the destination of the emigrant family, and, in what was then a wilderness country, the father re-engaged in agricultural pursuits. He subsequently removed to Utica, Oneida Co., N. Y., and died a few years afterwards. He left his family but little, and the little circle of orphaned children was scattered. Of the six children, three now survive. All through life, Elias J. Richards had the power of attracting warm friendships, whose sympathy and aid were ever prompt and generous. The earliest and most directive he found in Judge Jonas Platt, of Utica, a lawyer of extensive practice in that place and in New York city, who assumed the care and expense of his education. By his assistance the youth was enabled to attend a preparatory school in New York, and afterwards, in 1829, the Bloomfield Academy, Bloomfield, N. J. He entered Princeton College in 1831, and while yet an undergraduate, the choice for his life-work was presented him by his benefactor between a mercantile life, the legal, and the ministerial professions. A week was given for decision. The opportunities presented in such an emporium for success in either of the first two callings, with their attendant prospects of speedy wealth, luxury, influence, and position, must have been seductive allurements at that buoyant period

when the world looks brightest and its promises seem most certain of realization. For this was no vague offer. The places were open, and the prospects promising for pecuniary and social advancement. Nor was his choice with the wisdom of ignorance. He knew the contrast, accumulation and self-aggrandizement as opposed to the sacrifices and privations of the ministry. But he consulted not with flesh and blood. He has told me that his decision was made the moment he heard the offer. He hailed it as an unexpected answer to his desires, and, though he permitted the week to intervene, he never wavered from this judgment. Not only, nor for the most part, attracted by literary tastes to a field which promised their cultivation, but driven by the promptings of conscience, which was to him the voice of God, he elected to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. The sudden death of Judge Platt during the collegiate course of the young man prevented him from seeing the full fruition of his benefaction, and was a sad blow to its grateful recipient. As regards the time of, or circumstances connected with his conversion, nothing definite is known. It appears to have been previous to his entrance upon college life. It may have been under the preaching of the Rev. Charles G. Finney, an eminent evangelist of that period, of whose powerful labors subsequently in this church there are many still remaining to testify, or through the influence of the Rev. Dr. Spring, of New York city, with whose church he became connected, whose counsel he often sought, and of whom he always spoke in terms of respect and affection.

It is related by a living witness that as early as 1830, while he was attending the Academy at Bloomfield, N. J., there was a revival of religion in the town, and that he appeared in the scenes and Christian labors of the prayer-meetings and the Sabbath-schools. It is very probable that this is one of those occasional instances where a character susceptible and surrounded by good influences gradually and almost unconsciously emerges into the light and enlarged experiences of the Christian life, and that whatever changes transpired, either under the preaching of these honored servants of Christ, or subsequently, when amid the hallowed influences of Princeton, they were but successive developments in that spiritual life which had been begun in his youth. In 1834 he graduated from the College of New Jersey, already known and honored among his classmates for that taste and ability in belles-lettres which afterwards became so prominent and cultured. In the same year, being threatened with a pulmonary affection, he was enabled, through the kind offices of another valued friend, the Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, of Newark, N. J., to obtain a situation as tutor in Fredericksburg, Va., a position facilitating his desired recuperation. Here again he found friends, who opened the way, if he had chosen, to the study and successful practice of medicine. The kindness and congeniality of the friendships here formed were among the cherished themes of his last days. Having remained here for one year, he returned to Princeton and graduated at the Theological Seminary in 1838, and was licensed to preach in the spring of the

same year by the Presbytery of New York. His strong inclination was to return to his friends in Virginia, or to seek, in the genial clime and tropical beauties of the further south, his home and work. There was but one obstacle across that enticing path. He had looked upon slavery and hated it, and could not begin his career as a Christian teacher with an implied compromise of views already fixed and advanced.

He was commissioned as an evangelist, and preached for one year—1839—in Ann Arbor, Michigan. His health failing, he returned east in 1840, and organized the Second (N. S.) Presbyterian Church, Paterson, New Jersey, where he remained but two years, being called in 1842 to the Western (N. S.) Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

Of his professional work up to, and including this, we know but little. To say that it was uneventful in that which commands popular gaze and plaudit for itself is only to place upon it the common stamp of the faithful pastorate. Its informing principle is to count all things but loss that he may win Christ and attract souls to Him. The man is the minister and the minister is the man, the life is the profession and the profession is the life. Of this we feel sure, that everywhere that he has preached and prayed "his works do follow him."

In 1846 he was called three times to the First Presbyterian Church, at Reading, Pa. He finally yielded to what he felt to be the importunate call of duty, and took charge of this church in July, 1846, and was installed on the fourteenth of October, in the same year.

Here began his life-work. The preceding years, with their tossings and troublings and experimentings, had been but probationary, but preparative. The sapling had been transferred from one garden to another until here it became a tree of the Lord, full of sap, its roots penetrating deep and on every side into countless hearts and homes, its wide branches covering and yielding fruit to the fathers and children of many generations. For more than twenty-five years he stood here the messenger from God. For twenty-five years—what changes he saw, what work he did! He came to Reading and found it, as he expressed it, "a quaint little Dutch town up among the mountains;" he saw it enlarging its boundaries and population, multiplying and adorning its buildings, extending the variety and reach of its business, enriching its people, and advancing in every importance and power until it became the third city in the State. He found you in "The Old White Church;" it was his privilege to transfer you to this tasteful and commodious structure. He found you a few sheep in the wilderness; he left you the leading church in the Presbytery of Lehigh. At the beginning of his pastorate, the church roll numbered one hundred and sixty members. He has admitted more than five hundred to your communion, three-fifths of whom were upon profession of faith, and the actual number upon the roll at the time of his decease was four hundred and thirty. Time and again there have been the seasons of refreshing from the Lord, increasing the burdens of his isolated work, but multiplying his joys as the fruits of

the increase have been brought into this storehouse of God. He has preached for you more than three thousand sermons, and been with you at a hundred communions. He has baptized and married many of you, watched and prayed over the spiritual instruction of your children, received you and them into the communion of the church, comforted you when sick or distressed, stood by the bedside of your dying, buried your dead, like his Master of old, bearing your griefs and carrying your sorrows. And he was thus instant in season and out of season. For years he carried that wearied suffering body into duty, unconscious himself of the extent of the insidious disease, standing in this pulpit and following you to your homes for ministry to you, when he should have been upon his couch receiving from you your ministry of love and relief. Nor did he remain at this post by necessity, other than that of conscience; the solicitations to other fields were many and flattering, which were set aside because of his firm conviction of duty to remain. But how shall statements and dry statistics measure the fulness of a Christian work? Can you gauge the power and reach of one wave? How then will you when they are innumerable? Silently, steadily through all these years the influences have gone forth from his words and labors, duplicating and reduplicating themselves, transferring from father to son, rolling wave upon wave, until the word spoken in this place has found its echo on the shores of the Pacific, or upon another continent. Impressions, experiences, lives, the consolations that have

been spoken, the miseries that have been alleviated, the wavering that have been strengthened, the perplexed that have been enlightened, the wandering that have been reclaimed, the lives that have been purified, the hopes that have been conferred, the souls that have been saved because he lived, cannot be measured nor reckoned, and will be known only when the Day will declare to him and to us.

In noting the public work of his ministry, it would ill become me, it would be wrong, not to remind you that its influence was consecrated to the cause of Christian patriotism. It was his privilege to stand in this high tower in the time of national peril, and send forth the certain sound that warmed and strengthened the patriot heart. It is the calm testimony that I have heard more than once, that "he did more than any other one man in this city to encourage the hearts of the people and uphold the integrity of the government." Certain it is that men knew where he stood, that he loved his country, that he hoped and believed through everything, seeing the flag through the clouds, and giving of his confidence to other trembling ones, that he prayed and preached and wrote and sanctified every influence of this post to the interests of freedom and loyalty. That were sufficient to make his memory green to every Christian patriot.

As regards the literary virtues of these and all his public efforts, I doubt not your larger experience would not only confirm, but enhance the usual testimony to their excellence. He had superior intellectual abilities,

cultivated and enriched by a learning wide and intimate. He was a reader, a student, and a scholar. He loved books, books for the books' sake as well as for what was in them. I remember him looking upon his books with an affection which any scholar can understand, as he said: "They are a poor legacy, but a very delightful investment." His mind was wide, clear, discriminating, and well furnished. While his research was mainly and necessarily in the direction of theology, his sympathies were not limited by professional lines. Especially were his tastes marked and encouraged in the line of belles-lettres. He was known as a fine English scholar, that is, well informed in the literature of the English language. I doubt not that had he yielded to his natural inclination, the close of life would have found him upon a literary journal or in the professor's chair. As it was, it gave beauty and attractiveness to all his work. It imparted neatness, grace, and classic finish to his most hurried sermons, to his careless conversation a quiet humor and fancy, that played in the mellow sheen rather than startled by a comet's flash, a sprightliness to his most trite utterances, an ability and cultivation that made him a leading contributor, and one of the most acceptable, to the papers and reviews of his denomination. In 1843 he prepared for publication a memoir of Mrs. Morrison, who died in Calcutta, India, whither she had gone as a missionary with her husband, the Rev. Dr. Morrison. But he denied himself many such excursions into the

literary field, however congenial, that he might prepare beaten oil for the sanctuary.

In his personal character the traits were many and rare which made him loved and honored as the exemplary citizen, the sympathizing friend, the faithful pastor, and pure Christian. He was kind, tender-hearted as a woman, sensitive, ready to judge every one's sensibilities by his own, forbearing even to a fault, eager ever to find or to imagine some palliation or extenuation of the wrong-doing, continuously illustrating the exhortation of the Apostle, "considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." This tenderness many of you have often known as he came to you with the words of consolation, but could only speak his message by his grasp of the hand and his own falling tears. This sentiment of his personal life restrained him ofttimes in his official acts. Discipline was to him, as to every kindly heart, an unpleasant thing. He would have shirked it if he could. He would rather any day have been the culprit than the judge. Rather than mount the bench to sentence, he would go down to weep with the offender. It was this in all his relations that fitted him to be the approachable, genial companion, and made his speech so often like "apples of gold in baskets of silver."

He was a man of peace. He deprecated contentions. He was not at home amid the strifes of deliberative bodies. He turned from controversy not through inability, but dislike. His place would have been not in Ephesus, but in the Isle of Patmos, and his beloved

disciple would have been not Peter but John. Hence his unusual popularity outside of his own denomination. He gave to others the liberty he claimed for himself. He shut his eyes to differences, and sought some common ground for recognition and communion. And yet, with all this charity, is there one to rise and charge unfaithfulness, in teaching or influence, to the church of his adoption? He rightly thought that differences, both social and ecclesiastical, were sooner healed by ignoring than by notice and attack.

His life was a daily illustration of the apostolic exhortation: "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." When he was reviled, he reviled not again. When he suffered, he threatened not. That was his highest encomium conveyed in the challenge of his friend: "Where is the trouble that he ever made?" But who will count the troubles he prevented, or has healed? Hence it was that he was so sought as counsellor by conflicting parties before our church courts. Hence it was that he hailed the first token and labored so assiduously for that re-union of his beloved church, whose consummation God permitted him to behold. It was in the recognition of these labors, and of that peace-loving disposition for which he was so eminent, that in June, 1870, he was, by a unanimous vote, elected the first Moderator of the re-united Synod of Philadelphia. And yet this charity and desire for peace were not, as they so often are, the result of inability or indifference.

He knew what he believed. He formed opinions, he

held and defended them. He was a thoughtful man, a man of clear judgment, of quick perception, and keen discrimination, a reliability and worth that are attested by the work he has done, and the trusts and honors he has received of the church. But I doubt not changes have been projected, opinions formed, and resolutions made which have not been accomplished because of this overmastering charity and tenderness that recognized in other hearts a sensitiveness equal to his own, and that would not offend so much as a little child. And all this was sustained, sweetened, and purified by an abiding faith in the Christ whom he preached. It seems, it was providential, that, just before his last illness, in his quarter-century discourse, he should make formal confession of that faith which had been his for forty years, that there might be a denial to every questioning and the comfort of a certain and reasonable hope to those that remain. It is in his own words. "I have no doubt of the reality and truth of the Christian religion. . . . The doctrines of grace—atonement by the blood of a dying Saviour, justification by His righteousness, sanctification by the spirit of God, and the guarantees of saintship, and sonship—these are shrined within my heart. . . . I expect to be saved through no merit of my own, but by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Through Him alone have I righteousness and peace. . . . This hope has been my stay and support, my delight and comfort. . . . Its resources and provisions are all-sufficient for my spiritual necessities. And now, when the shadows begin to

lengthen, I look with composure into the tomb, and with joyful anticipations to my heavenly home in the skies."

The closing words seem prophetic. Scarcely had he thus declared himself, when God, by the hand of disease, put him to the last test of his faith. That painful, lingering illness you all remember. It was my privilege to be often with him, and in the last hour of his consciousness to kneel by his bedside, and I give you record this day that never, by word or sign, did I have aught to signify that he had wavered or changed in his faith, or that its promised rod and staff had failed in the valley of the shadow of death. During his illness he bore its pains with fortitude, and was hopeful of restoration and prolonged life. He wanted to live. But let not that be misunderstood as a clinging to life for life's sake, or as a fear of death for death's sake. It was to do duty better, and to complete his work. It is not unchristian to desire to live. The good Hezekiah in bitterness turned toward the wall and prayed for life, and God lengthened his days. It was for Christian life and work that your pastor wished, and that same grace that created the wish for longer days enabled him, in the last struggle, to commend his incomplete work and all that he loved into the hands of a covenant-keeping God, and to say, "The will of the Lord be done." So he died, and was saved from that which had been his apprehension through many years, "a decrepit, helpless, and profitless old age." So he died, and there was lamentation in Israel, and devout

men carried him to his burial. It is meet that in yonder cemetery he should lie in the midst of those to whom he had been the minister of strength and consolation by his presence, reminding the living of his calls of grace, and waiting with his trusting flock to hear the summons, that they may together rise in the resurrection and the life.

He has gone, passed from this family to that family that is named of Christ, from this city to that other which hath foundations, from this solemn assembly to the innumerable company of the worshipping angels, from this church to the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven, from the uncongenial associations and jarrings of sinful men to the glorious company of the Apostles, to the goodly fellowship of the prophets, to the noble army of martyrs.

It is the end. The hand is nerveless, the pen is dropped, the sentence is left unfinished, and he that would know further of his earthly being must trace it in the dust that has returned to dust. The book is closed, and closed it must remain until He shall come who has in His hand the keys of death. The workman dies, but his work is immortal. Upon that foundation from the wise Master-Builder, the gold, the silver, the precious stones which he built cannot perish. They remain the testimony to his faithfulness and assurance of his reward, the assertion of your opportunities, and the demand for your acknowledgment.

Then, though his form be no longer seen, nor his voice heard in these accustomed scenes, it is well that

ofttimes here and round your family hearth-stones you recall his character and labors. For the lives of such as he are the reiterated assurance to the world that the tabernacle of God is with men. It is good for the world that such as he have lived and died. Of how few, even of the known and favored, may that be said? But the life of a good man! It is an emphatic testimony against error, and selfishness, and injustice, and all wrong-doing: it arrests the heedlessness of the racing world, it transfers to earth the holiness of heaven, it incarnates the beauty of Christ, it exhales on all around purity and truth, and, departing, leaves behind it the fragrance and fruits of a real spiritual life. Gather to yourselves the fruits of this life; cherish its admonitions; respect its precepts; emulate its fidelity; imitate its faith; solicit its simplicity; guard its immortal work; enshrine its memory in your hearts and its virtues in your lives.

But words and occasions are vain. What is the judgment of men to him who has already appeared before the judgment seat of Christ? What are our fading laurels to that brow already honored with the crown of life to which immortal gems are adding their lustre, as one by one your souls ascend, redeemed and resplendent in heavenly glory.

Let fond hands, if they will, twine the laurel and scatter fresh flowers upon the grave, let skilful hands uplift the storied monument, or modest tablet tell the passing traveler his many virtues, but let this be your memorial—better than fading flowers or breathed-out

praise, more enduring than brass, and purer than the Parian marble—a life animated by the same faith, purified by the same love, irradiated by the same hope, and consecrated to the same God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to his voice as it comes to you through so many sanctified channels, lingering round your homes and hearts, your bedsides and your closets, speaking in the precious memories and sacred offices of this hallowed spot, breathing through the solemn stillness of this hour, calling in the realities and suggestions of yon new-made grave; listen, it is the voice of the dead: "Remember not me, but the words which I spake unto you while I was yet present with you. Choose the Saviour I have chosen. Live for heaven. Live for immortality." And if thou wouldst have thy memory fragrant and thy work eternal, if thou wouldst abide upon the earth and yet be forever honored with the heavenly coronation, be thou faithful, be thou faithful unto death. Amen.

THE CLOSING SCENES.

The close of the twenty-fifth year of the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Richards in Reading, was an epoch in his ministry which made a profound impression upon his mind. This, it may be presumed, was the result both of the natural emotion which a review of his life and labors during that long and eventful period stirred up in his deeply sensitive and sympathetic breast, and the significant bearing which manifestly increasing physical infirmities exerted over his future. In his Quarter-Century Sermon—an effort that does enduring credit to his mind and heart, and which contributed to cement still more deeply the feeling of attachment for him on the part of the people with whom he lived and labored the greater portion of the effective period of his life—he refers to a consciousness of bodily decline, but trustingly forbears to forecast his lot during the remaining days of his earthly pilgrimage. There is reason to believe that, when he thus wrote, his health had already been threatened in such a way as to begin to awaken his serious apprehensions. Yet he was hopeful, and he closes this tenderly conceived and

touching discourse with the expression of the heroic impulse that animated the Roman sentinel—to die at the post of duty. It seems, indeed, a remarkable dispensation of Providence, that this good and useful man was to end his earthly labors so soon after turning aside to mark the progress he had made in his journeyings with this people—that so soon after imparting to them his blessing he was to mount up, as Moses of old, on Nebo, and be translated to the promised land.

The Quarter-Century Sermon, preached on the 9th of July, 1871, was the last pulpit production he ever wrote. The middle of the summer had arrived, and his congregation tendered him an unlimited respite from his labors. The three following Sabbaths he occupied his pulpit as usual. The last sermon he preached was delivered in his church on Sunday evening, July 30. It was from the text, Job xxix. 18: "Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand." The theme of this discourse was the Disappointments of Life, and in it he showed how often our plans are overruled by God's decrees—how men count upon life as the medium of gain and good, and how God frequently overthrows their schemes by requiring their souls of them at such times as they think not of.

He left Reading on Tuesday, August 1, for a visit of a fortnight to a brother residing on a farm in the vicinity of Utica, New York. The Sabbath following, August 6, he attended church in the vicinity. It was the communion season, and he participated in the

ordinance, and, being called upon, delivered a few remarks at the distribution of the elements.

The day was warm and sultry, and, returning home, he, in the afternoon, threw himself upon the floor of the country house, without his coat, and thus passed a couple of hours in reading. In the evening he again exposed himself similarly in the open air, conversing until a late hour beneath the tall trees in front of the dwelling. The same night he was seized with an attack of illness, which at once assumed a painful and alarming character. The effect of the cold he had taken, it was the subsequently expressed medical opinion, was simply to accelerate the development of the disease which had lain dormant for some time in his system (an affection of the kidneys, of the chronic type), and which eventually brought him to his end. On Tuesday his family in Reading were telegraphed for, and his wife and eldest son hastened to his bedside, arriving in the afternoon of the following day. They found him rather more comfortable, having successfully passed through an agonizing crisis in the medical treatment of his disease. He remained at his brother's house for a little over three weeks, tenderly cared for. The medical attentions which he received, however, were inconvenient to obtain, and it became greatly desirable that he should be brought to his home, if possible. In a weak and still suffering condition he undertook the journey on Friday, the 1st of September, arriving home the following afternoon, after traveling uninterruptedly for over twenty-four hours, a distance of nearly four

hundred miles. Every arrangement was made for his comfort on the route, yet he suffered great prostration from the journey.

Soon after his arrival, it began to be apparent that his disease was of such a character as to be beyond the possibility of arrest by medical aid, and that the limit to which he might last was merely a question of time. Throughout the long illness which followed, in the course of which he was called to endure at times the keenest suffering, he bore his pain patiently and without a murmur. It was his good fortune during the entire progress of this sickness to have the unremitting attendance of two of the leading physicians of the city, Drs. Wallace and Ulrich, both members of his church, who night and day devoted themselves to the alleviation of his sufferings, and did all that medical skill and Christian sympathy could suggest.

After about a month's confinement to bed, he was able to sit up and see a few of his friends. Some time afterwards he rode out, on one occasion, a short distance, in a carriage. The deepest interest was manifested throughout his whole illness by his warmly attached congregation, and the community in general, in his situation, and announcements from time to time of his condition were eagerly received. In the latter part of December, he was enabled to be present at, and moderate, a meeting of the church session, held in his study, to examine several candidates for admission to membership. During the succeeding months of January and February, 1872, he frequently came down stairs to

meals, and saw all friends who called, and there seemed to be a temporary change for the better in the symptoms of his complaint. He attended to correspondence, and endeavored to apply himself to the revision of a work on Christian Experience, which wanted a few chapters of completion, and which he was anxious to finish. In February, he baptized four infant children of parents belonging to his church, and this was his last pastoral act. During this month, the improvement in his condition was so satisfactory as to induce some hope that he might again be able to preach. He was hopeful himself, clung to the idea of a restoration to pastoral labor, and began to lay plans for future work. In reference to the possibility of renewed usefulness, he remarked that if again permitted to occupy his pulpit, he could preach as he had never preached before.

But these indications were fallacious, and his own hopes, and the hopes and expectations of his family and devoted friends, were doomed to a speedy disappointment. He approached the month of March with apprehension, on account of its unfavorable associations with his health for many years previous. About the middle of that month, he was apprised of the death of his college classmate and life-long friend, Gilbert Coombs, A.M., of Philadelphia, who, he was aware, had recently been stricken down with the same disease, and with whom he had shortly before exchanged letters of sympathy. This intelligence greatly shocked and agitated him, and in his weak condition doubtless hastened his end. Exactly two weeks these friends remained divided. In

a few days he grew rapidly worse, and his life soon hung trembling in the balance. The prayers of his stricken flock went up to God that he might be spared. Their beloved pastor, the idol of their hearts and the corner-stone of their earthly religious associations—how could God take him away while yet in the full tide of his Christian usefulness? But His ways are not as our ways. In the economy of God's administration of this world's affairs, no one man is indispensable.

Throughout the greater part of his illness, he had the companionship of his temporary pastoral substitute and ultimate successor, the Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, with whom he took counsel concerning the affairs of the church, and who ministered to him in his dying hours, receiving his parting blessing. On Friday, the 22d of March, he was made acquainted by his physicians with the fact that he was near his end. He said simply, "Is it so?" On the evening of that day he had the last rational interview with his family. Though faint and so feeble as scarcely to be intelligible, his mind at this time was clear. He left a blessing for his congregation, and sent messages to the little children he had recently baptized, and desired that they should be taught to remember him. He said, distinctly, to his eldest daughter, who bent over him, "My faith is in Christ." This was his last connected expression. He soon became delirious, and the same night was believed to be dying. He lingered, however, three days longer, and on the Monday evening following, the 25th of March, at a little before eight o'clock, God took him.

On Friday afternoon, March 29, 1872 (Good Friday), the funeral services of the Rev. Dr. Richards took place in the First Presbyterian Church. The pulpit and surroundings were heavily draped with black, relieved here and there by a cross or wreath of immortelles. The body of the deceased was removed from the dwelling at 11 A.M., and borne to the church and deposited in front of the pulpit. Here, from this time until 1 P.M.—the hour fixed for the commencement of the services—the remains were viewed by hundreds, who crowded forward to take a last look at the face of the beloved dead. The coffin was covered with black cloth and silver mounted, a plate upon the lid containing a suitable inscription. The body was laid out in a full suit of black, with white neckcloth. The features were calm, natural, and peaceful.

At the hour appointed for the funeral the church was crowded with a sad concourse of people, for all were mourners. The various clergy of the city occupied seats in a body, convenient to the pulpit. The occasion was one of the deepest solemnity. As the funeral cortege entered the aisle, a dirge was played upon the organ.

The services were conducted by the Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, and opened with the singing of the hymn by the choir:—

"How blest the righteous when he dies."

A selection of Scripture was then read, and prayer offered by Mr. Radcliffe. This was followed by the singing of the familiar hymn, which was a favorite with the deceased,

"Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,"—

After which several prominent clergymen from abroad were introduced, and delivered addresses.

The Rev. Z. M. Humphrey, D.D., pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, was the first speaker. In answer to the inquiry, what brought so large an audience together on one of the secular days of the week, he said it was the sympathy of their hearts, and the unusual interest manifested by the community in this sad bereavement. These emblems of mourning told of the great loss this congregation and city had sustained. These flowers symbolized a life and character made perfect through the grace of God. When an elder in the church dies, it is always an occasion of unusual interest, particularly when his pious influence has been exercised over the church for many years. But the occasion is one of especially deep and solemn interest when, as in the present instance, a beloved pastor is removed, who has so long and faithfully ministered to his congregation. As the speaker had seen, in his boyhood, in his native New England village, an old tree that had grown in the central square for many years, and sheltered under its protecting shade the fathers and the children for many generations, suddenly prostrated by the violence of the storm, the

people of the village, old and young, gathered with sorrow and affection around its uprooted trunk, until it seemed as if its roots had gone into every home and heart; so this multitude gather here to-day around the prostrate form of this good man, who had stood in this place for twenty-five years, sending out his grateful influences into all these homes and hearts. Oh! what a gap these old trees make when they are taken away. There are many here to-day whose hearts are torn by the removal of him who was so greatly honored and beloved. It seems as if not only something had gone from his life, and the life of his household, but from the lives of this congregation and community. The speaker referred to the significance of the day fixed for these ceremonies. It was the day of the death and burial of our Lord, a day most fitting for this Christian man to descend with his Saviour to the tomb. As we see about us in this vernal season the tokens of already reviving nature, so do we also look, even in this bleakness and barrenness, for a restoration and a joy when he whom we thus commit to the silence and darkness of the grave, shall, with his Saviour, appear again in the final glories of the resurrection.

Rev. Daniel March, D.D., pastor of Clinton Street Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, followed, in an eloquent tribute. There were nations, he said, that had rich men, mighty men, and yet those nations were poor, and there are nations called poor, which were rich because they had good men. To-day this congregation and community were mourning the greatness of their

loss. For twenty-five years, in this busy hum of industry, this faithful man of God has gone to and fro in the accomplishment of his mission. For twenty-five years in this city he has gone about doing good. Who can estimate the value of his influence? I can truly bear you witness that home-life in this entire community has been made purer and better from the fact that such a man has lived among you. It is a great thing for a man to live in this world for twenty-five years and do good. My heart was never so touched, nor have I ever received so great a compliment in my life as was conveyed in the childish remark of a little girl in one of the families of my congregation, who said to a visitor, as she pointed to a picture of her pastor, hanging on the chamber wall, "That is God's man." It is a great thing to be God's man upon the earth, and it is a great thing to be able to stand here to-day, and say over the body of this faithful pastor, "This was God's man." How many times he has blessed this house by his words, always so fittingly spoken. How many times he has bowed down at the bedside of sickness and suffering, and spoken tender words of comfort to the sick and dying. There are many living temples of his goodness and tenderness in this house to-day which are desolate and silent, because of the light that has gone out, and the voice of admonition and instruction that is silent.

Rev. Dr. Cattell, President of Lafayette College, at Easton, said, with deep feeling, that during all these services two passages of Scripture had been forcibly

suggested to his mind. The first was, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." It is not all of death to die, but the greatest part is to have the Christian's hope and promise of dying in the Lord. He could speak much of his dear, departed brother, so cultured, so scholarly. He referred to his intercourse with him for many years in connection with the legislation of the church, and bore testimony to his goodness of heart, his sturdy common sense, his purity, his soundness and judiciousness as a church counsellor, and his patience and influence as a Presbyter. He had learned to love and honor him, with their increasing intimacy. The other Scriptural passage that had arisen in his mind was, "He being dead yet speaketh." The dead man in his coffin speaks in the eminent piety and purity and goodness of his life. Dr. Cattell, in the concluding part of his remarks, spoke with great pathos and impressiveness in well-chosen words of comfort to the bereaved family and flock.

The Rev. C. F. McCauley, pastor of the Second Reformed Church of Reading, expressed the sentiment of the clergy of the city in the great loss they had sustained. He said he had known Dr. Richards since 1855, and had known him only to love and praise him. He had had an ever increasing appreciation of his character as an able and efficient minister of the gospel, a thorough and accomplished scholar, an humble and devout follower of our Lord, a high-toned Christian gentleman, and a genial, kind, and sympathizing friend, with whom it was pleasant to take counsel, and in

whose hands the speaker could trust his reputation—his most sacred interests, under any circumstances, with perfect safety. A discourteous or unkind act or word was altogether foreign to his character. In using this language, Mr. McCauley said he felt that he was authorized to speak in behalf of all his brethren in the ministry in the city. As ministers of the gospel, and co-laborers with Dr. Richards, they deeply felt his loss, believing, however, that in the Communion of Saints he was still with them. They had come hither to-day to sit as silent mourners. Rev. Mr. McCauley then stated that upon the announcement of the death of the Rev. Dr. Richards, a meeting of the clergy of the city had been called by him at the suggestion of Rev. Dr. Schmucker, and others, and convened in the Second Reformed Church, to take suitable action in reference to that event. A cordial response was given, and a minute read by Dr. Schmucker had been unanimously adopted, and the speaker was requested to read it on the occasion of the burial services, after consultation with the family of the deceased. The minute was as follows:—

"Forasmuch as it has pleased our Heavenly Father to bring to a close the life and labors on earth of our honored and beloved brother, the Rev. Elias J. Richards, D.D., the high place which he had in our esteem, and in that of the whole community, and the loss which his death has occasioned to his household, his congregation, his brethren in the ministry, and to the city, render it fitting that we, his fellow-laborers in the work of the

Lord in this place, should give expression to our regard for him, and our sorrow on account of his death.

"As a man he had such gentleness, kindness, and purity of natural disposition, and divine grace had brought forth in him such and so many excellent fruits of the Spirit, that his daily life bore testimony that he had been with Jesus, and had learned of Him, and it was pleasant to take counsel with him, and mark his spirit.

"As a minister of Christ's church, he had a high sense of the importance of diligent and laborious study; from the beginning to the close of his work he never relaxed his habits of scholarly research and thoughtful meditation, and his attainments entitled him to an honored place among the learned in the ministry of our land. His preparations for the pulpit were habitually made with very great care, and under a deep sense of his responsibility to God. To the work of his ministry his life was consecrated without reserve.

"As a pastor he was very gentle, tender, patient, earnest, and faithful, and the congregation to which so large a part of his life was so faithfully devoted has our warm sympathies in the severe loss which it has sustained.

"In his relations to his brethren in the ministry he was kindly and courteous in a degree that could scarcely be surpassed. He has set to us a beautiful example of high-toned Christian courtesy, which will make his memory very precious to us.

"We hereby extend our kindly sympathies to his

bereaved household, and to the congregation long highly favored by his labors, now enduring loss.

"We will attend the funeral services in the Presbyterian church on Friday, at 1 P.M."

Rev. J. Fry, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading, then offered an impressive prayer, in which he specially invoked the Divine comfort upon the stricken widow and bereaved family.

A duet entitled "The Spirit Land," a very beautiful composition that had always been a favorite with the deceased pastor, was then sung with much taste and feeling by two former members of the choir, Mrs. A. R. Durham and Mrs. J. C. Brown:—

"There is a land mine eye hath seen
In visions of enraptured thought,
So bright that all that spreads between
Is with its radiant glories fraught."

The services then closed, and the body was borne from the church by the following gentlemen, who had been designated as the pall-bearers: Rev. Messrs. Cornelius Earle, of Catasaqua; J. W. Wood, of Allentown; Goodloe B. Bell, of New York City; John Moore and John Thompson, of Pottstown; and Albert Erdman, of Morristown, New Jersey.

As the cortege moved from the house to the place of interment, the church bell was solemnly tolled, and everywhere along the line of the procession sad crowds of people gazed reverentially at the passing by of the remains of one so long and generally known, and

so universally respected and beloved throughout the community. Everything betokened the solemnity that was befitting the occasion. At the Charles Evans Cemetery, where the burial took place, a very large assemblage was convened to mingle their tears in the last sad rites at the grave of the departed pastor. The body was committed to the earth by the Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, and the Rev. Dr. Humphrey pronounced the benediction.

ACTION OF THE CONGREGATION.

At a meeting of the Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church, held on Sabbath evening, March 31, 1872, immediately after the close of public worship, on motion, William M. Baird, Esq., was called to the chair, and Edwin F. Smith appointed Secretary.

The following resolutions were offered to the meeting by Dr. D. A. Ulrich:—

Whereas, It has pleased Almighty God, in His wise providence, to remove from our midst the Rev. Elias J. Richards, D.D., who for twenty-six years has been the beloved and honored pastor of this church, we, the members of this church and congregation, do here resolve—

That in this said dispensation we devoutly recognize the presence of our Heavenly Father, who doth not afflict willingly, but loveth whom he chasteneth, and has in this very trial a lesson for us of Divine wisdom and affection, and pray Him so to sanctify it that in all our hearts there may be wrought even now the promised exceeding weight of glory.

That we here give testimony to the purity and attractiveness of his private character, and the faithfulness and honor of his public life. In his social relations he was kind, winning, and congenial. In his pastoral offices he was patient, intelligent, watchful, peace-making, and sympathetic, weeping in our sorrow, and rejoicing in our joy. In his public ministrations he was instructive and persuasive, ever evidencing, not only the ripe scholarship and culture of the student, but the prayerful devotion that was earnest to hold forth the word of life to perishing sinners, and approve himself in all things a minister needing not to be ashamed.

That we gladly record our conviction that his life illustrated the power of the gospel he preached, and that death was not only to him

a relief from protracted pain, but the welcome messenger from Him who is the Resurrection and the Life.

That we will cherish the memory of his life and labors, that he being dead may yet speak to us the restraining and comforting counsels of our beloved Lord.

That we invoke the special presence and care of the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, that in this hour of bereavement we may not be as sheep without a shepherd, but guided in all our counsels, and preserved in the unity of the spirit, which is the bond of peace.

That we extend to the bereaved wife and family our deepest sympathy in their affliction, and commend them in our prayers to the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforted us in all our tribulations.

That a copy of this paper be presented to the family, and also to the daily papers of this city, and the religious papers of our church, for publication.

Dr. Edward Wallace, in the course of some feeling and appropriate remarks, moved the adoption of the resolutions, which was seconded by William H. Livingood, Esq., in an address of a similar character.

The resolutions were subsequently unanimously adopted.

The meeting then adjourned.

ACTION OF THE LEHIGH PRESBYTERY.

At the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Lehigh, convened in the First Presbyterian Church at Easton, Pa., April 16, 1872, the death of the Rev. Dr. Richards having been announced by the Moderator, Rev. D. S. Banks, on motion a committee consisting of Revs. J. W. Wood and Cornelius Earle, and Elder Lot Benson, was appointed to prepare a minute expressive of the sentiment of the body in reference to the event. The committee reported the following, which was unanimously adopted:—

The Presbytery having heard of the decease of one of its ministerial members, the Rev. Elias J. Richards, D.D., the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Reading, put upon its records with sad yet trusting hearts the following minute:—

1. We recognize in this removal of our beloved brother the hand of the Covenant-keeping Head of the church, who, while He removes his faithful servants from their earthly sphere of labor, raises them thereby to the full possession and enjoyment of the promised inheritance of the saints.

2. This Presbytery is specially made to know by this dispensation that ministers must die, and appear before God to give an account of their stewardship, and we would, therefore, be moved to an increased faithfulness in the work of the Lord.

3. While we sorely feel our loss as a Presbytery, we give thanks to God for the grace that counted our brother worthy putting him in the ministry; that he was permitted so long and successfully to preach the gospel, and to go in and out as a pastor among a loving and confiding people, ever maintaining the dignity of his office, and exhibiting the tenderness and faithfulness of a true under-shepherd.

4. We are thankful for the grace and the gifts bestowed upon our departed brother, whereby he became a high-toned Christian gentleman,

uniting gentleness with courage; in learning profound, yet unobtrusive; wise in zeal, and firm in purpose; a workman that needed not to be ashamed.

5. This Presbytery hereby convey to his bereaved family their Christian sympathies and condolence, and also to his church where he was so useful and so beloved, and our stated clerk is hereby directed to furnish them both with a copy of this minute.

MEMORIAL TABLET.

At the stated congregational meeting of the First Presbyterian Church, held on Wednesday evening, May 1, 1872, Dr. J. K. McCurdy in the chair, and Mr. F. R. Schmucker, Secretary, Mr. Louis Richards offered the following—

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed by the Chairman of this meeting to take the necessary steps towards the erection in the church, by voluntary subscription, of a suitable tablet to the memory of the late Rev. Dr. Richards, to whose plans and efforts we are in a great part indebted, as well for the architectural perfection of the church edifice itself, as for the spiritual prosperity which attended us as a congregation during the twenty-five years of his faithful ministry in this charge.

The resolution was unanimously adopted, and the chairman appointed as the members of said committee, Messrs. Louis Richards, William H. Livingood, William G. McGowan, W. E. C. Coxe, and H. A. Yundt.

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